

**Prufrock Renewed**  
(with overtures to Eliot)

Let us go then, you and I  
Through the fallout from the sky  
Into the half deserted street  
Where the people that we meet  
Are counting one by one  
The TNT in a Megaton.

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Zen and Marlon Brando.

The yellow smog that seeps in through  
the window pane,  
The yellow fog of radioactive rain  
Drifts coldly from the stratosphere...  
Am I really honor bound  
To build a shelter underground  
Or is there a moral issue here...  
Should I stay above with you, dear?  
We could have a group discussion--  
Better yet, please place your bets;  
There might be a repercussion  
From an open-end discussion,  
Besides I'm out of cigarettes...

And indeed there will be time,  
Time to be discursive  
About matters unsubversive;  
Time for questions, but discreet,  
To the people that we meet;  
Time for surveys motivational  
Upon the hazards occupational,  
Time to talk of missile lag  
And the tale that makes the dog wag--  
Buying habits, trends and ratings,  
Conservation, carbon datings;  
Time to speak of water-fouling  
And laborleaders' cheek by jowling  
With the image corporational;  
It should be quite educational...



In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Playtex and Picasso.

Do I dare--oh, do I dare  
Approve the freedom riders?  
Do I dare, or don't you care?  
Are they merely rank outsiders?  
Shall I drop my membership in  
the Metropolitan?  
Or could that be construed as  
climbing on the caravan?  
I don't know...I just don't know...  
Shall I hold for status quo?  
Is there something to be said for  
positive thinking?  
Or have the smart ones turned again  
to vodka drinking?  
Is it worth it after all?  
Shall I switch to Metrecal?

Shall I try to make you see--  
Or shall I let the matter be?  
When I talk you watch the clock  
And I feel the need to shock--  
Is rape a crime, or self-expression?  
Are you in favor of repression?  
Excuse me for that brief digression...  
Apathy seems safer...I don't know...  
But they're condemning apathy  
In favor of anxiety  
Everywhere you go.  
I don't quite know...  
Apathy seems somehow neater,  
More cultured--if you like, effeter.  
I just don't know...  
Shall I sing along with Mitch?  
Is there something wrong with being rich?  
I really can't say  
Which way...which way...

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of canapes and Castro.

There will be time...there will be time  
To sit and plan the perfect crime,



To talk about the big explosion  
Of the population,  
To talk about the soil erosion  
And the new space station.  
(Just don't involve me in an altercation.)  
Shall I join the peace corps?  
But it would be such a bore...  
Peace, you know, and all those persons...  
Still...if the situation worsens...  
A man could be courageous  
Against a fortune quite outrageous  
When there were but slings and arrows  
Instead of germs that eat bone marrows...

The magic lantern throws the nerves  
in patterns on the screen  
And in glass walled boxes shows the  
twisted spleen.

Is it art or is it opiate?  
Is it really quite appropriate--  
And does your skin feel really 'clean'?  
I measure out each 'calorie  
Passing chocolate up for tea  
But I can't brush after ever meal...  
Shall I take a tranquilizer  
Or a tired blood energizer?  
Or perhaps a rhinoplasty,  
But that might be too 'contrastly--  
I'm not sure just how I feel...

In the room the women come and go  
Shouting above the stereo.

No, I'm not Olivier, nor was meant to be,  
Besides Olivier 'can't play Tennessee...  
But Tennessee has reached the masses,  
Filtered to the lower classes.  
The theater is dead, or thriving,  
Or like a Method Lazarus, reviving...

I shall grow old, or shall I? What's  
the answer?

There are still cholesterol and cancer...  
Shall I buy a house split levelled  
Or shall I go around dishvelled?



Are beatniks out or are they in?  
Will Goldwater grow a double chin?

Shall I vote or just forget it?  
If I don't will I regret it?  
Will I die or fade away?  
Is there tomorrow or just today?

What's that? Oh, please don't speak  
to me of mermaids;  
They're clammy and they're common--  
Wearing those long plastic braids  
And flapping around only partially bare.  
Oh, I don't know, or really care--  
Life doesn't seem much fun...  
Somehow it doesn't seem much fun...

-- Phyllis Onstott Arone

. . . . .

You told me once  
that the curve of my cheek  
gives me away: I'm a  
child, really.

The man in the lighted box across  
a sooty night from my lighted box  
with a certain unaware salute  
flicks his (I presume) ashes  
into a round  
dish for ashes. Is he  
a child? does night  
rock him asleep in the  
curve of its cheek?

-- Susan Solomont

Presque Isle, Maine